

ANNUAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR USAID VIETNAM

I. Name of Cooperative Agreement

1. Name of Implementing partner: Catholic Relief Services
2. Cooperative Agreement Number: 486-A-00-05-00019-00)
3. Title of Project: Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities
4. Date of Report Submission: October 31, 2011
5. Reporting Period: October 2010 – September 2011

II. Goals, Objectives and Progress to date

1. Report on achievements

a. Annual impact assessment

Project Goal	Children and youth with disabilities in Vietnam experience greater quality of life through full educational and social inclusion.
Key Impact Indicators	% of ITTP graduates are employed. % of ITTP costs are contributed by school partners and businesses to demonstrate their ownership in program maintenance and development. % of core PA members with increased knowledge and skills on organizational management as shown through pre- and post-training surveys.
Base-line	N/A
Accomplishments against the indicators	80% of ITTP graduates are employed. 94% of core PA members with increased knowledge and skills on organizational management as shown through pre- and post-training surveys

b. Key achievements

	Indicator (s)	Achievements to-date	Annual target
Strategic Objective 1 (IR 1)	% of ITTP graduates are employed.	81%	80%
Output 1 (Sub IR 1)	# of youth with disabilities complete ITTP training in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City during the cost extension phase.	291	300
	# of new businesses who hire ITTP	10	10

	graduates during cost extension phase.		
Output 2 (Sub IR 2)	% of ITTP costs are contributed by school partners and businesses to demonstrate their ownership in program maintenance and development.	52%	40%
Strategic Objective 2 (IR 1)	% of core PA members with increased knowledge and skills on organizational management as shown through pre- and post-training surveys.	94%	90%
Output 1 (Sub IR 1)	# of new Parent Associations established. # of parents participate in core leadership groups of Parent Associations. # of additional parents and caregivers of CWD join Parent Association activities in their communes. # of new and existing Parent Associations that are capable to continue operations by the end of the extension phase	26 1222 1486 40	26 390 2210 40
Output 2 (Sub IR 2)	# of CWD receive quality community support services.	1282	1300

Narrative:

Information Technology Training Programs (ITTP)

During this fiscal year, this project has met most targets set forth for the cost-extension phase. CRS continued to collaborate with Hanoi College of Information Technology (HCIT) and Van Lang University (VLU) to implement ITTP for people with disabilities (PWD) in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) respectively. During this period, the overall training target was increased from 100 students per year to 300 students per year. Both schools also phased out short-term general IT trainings, and placed more emphasis on training PWD students for job placement. To achieve the much more ambitious targets, HCIT and VLU started to explore **co-designing training courses with employers** so that ITTP students are trained in specific skills needed by employers, improving their chances to be employed after completing their training. The two schools collaborated with Vietnam Blind Association (VBA) and jointly developed a Training of Trainers (TOT) course for visually impaired people. Graduates of this course would return to their home provinces and be employed by VBA's provincial branch offices as computer trainers for other VBA members. HCIT also collaborated with Pixel Company to training ITTP students in graphics design, and VLU has collaborated with LogiGear to train ITTP students in software testing.

During this fiscal year, both schools continued to provide **soft skill training** for ITTP students. Both schools have integrated soft skill training into the overall curriculum. To encourage students to practice their team work and communication skills, students are required to study and work in groups, make presentations and communicate through email. To encourage ITTP

students to improve their social skills and self confidence, they are encouraged to participate in social activities with non-disabled students. ITTP schools also established linkage with professional soft skill training organizations, especially those ran by and for PWD. These organizations facilitated special soft skill training sessions, career counseling and job preparation trainings for ITTP students.

Each school appointed at least one staff to be responsible for **linking ITTP students with jobs or internships**. The schools also met with business representatives on regular basis in Business Advisory Council meetings to learn about the most demanded skills in the labor market to ensure ITTP curriculums are relevant, and to market ITTP students to potential employers. Through this combination of targeted technical training, integrated soft skill training, and proactive linkage with potential employers, ITTP schools are able to place more than 80% of ITTP graduates in jobs or internship.

Parent Associations (PAs)

During this fiscal year, the project has successfully **established and strengthened 26 new PAs** and strengthened 14 existing PAs in Quang Nam and Ninh Binh provinces. All PAs were formed with clear management structure in charge of planning and coordinating PA activities such as monthly planning meetings, peer support groups for CWD, and home-based consultations for parents of CWD. Parents account for at least 70% of each PA's management board, while teachers, local authorities and mass organization representatives make up the other 30%. The first significant result of this project is the **increased capacity** of parents of CWD to support CWD and maintain regular PA activities as well as other stakeholders. These parents participated in PAs activities such as awareness raising events, training workshops, planning meetings and counselling activities that were designed to increase parents of CWD and other community members' understanding of disability issues in the whole project.

After training courses on project management and fundraising, PAs submitted **small grant** proposals and 51 were approved for implementation. This shows PAs' improved capacity to assess needs and design support programs for CWD in the communes. PA members put their assessment and management skills into developing and implementing small grant activities to support CWD in promoting their life skills and academic learning. Small grant projects included many different support activities and methods of implementation.

Furthermore, the project promotes **networking and experience sharing** activities among all 40 PAs in Quang Nam and Ninh Binh provinces and with external groups through the regional disabled persons' organizations (DPOs) conferences in Danang and in Hanoi. These are the first time that parents have roles and voices to share needs of their CWDs with policy makers and other social activists at national level. To further strengthen their experience, Quang Nam PAs and Ninh Binh PAs also had an exchange workshop in Hiep Duc district. They also had external sharing with Hoi An Parents Club and Hoi An Organization of Youth with Disabilities and Hanoi Association of parents of children with developmental delay. At all exchange workshops, parents had opportunities to report on their success in supporting CWD, share lessons learnt,

and discuss how they can improve cooperation among different associations and better sustain their organizations.

With technical support from the project, PAs organized **medical assessment** for all children suspected to have disabilities. This assessment confirmed 1282 children as having disabilities. Of the confirmed CWD, 796 are attending inclusive schools, and 1,138 CWD are receiving different support activities such as health support, home-based teaching and peer support activities from this project. The project also arranged for follow-up health checks for children identified in the initial screening as candidates for medical intervention. As a result, 48 children received hearing aids, 7 children received glasses and 22 children had small surgeries. Those direct interventions improved children's functioning, and improved their ability to participate in regular educational and social activities.

Moreover, 481 children received monthly **home-based teaching and counselling** by core parents and teachers. Parents of CWD and CWD benefit greatly from these activities. During counseling, parents have chances to learn from each other and psychologically support one another. Notably, 83 children with severe disabilities have made impressive progress and improved their life significantly thanks to home-based teaching activities.

Peer group activities also contributed to increase social inclusion of CWD. In these activities, CWD and friends help each other in learning, playing games, and helping friends at schools and at home. Peer group activities have benefited 401 CWD. These activities have been resulted from the increased capacity of parents and community members.

One special result in this project is the establishment and operation of **2 PAs in ethnic minority communes** in Hiep Duc district, Quang Nam province. After a health screening, 50 children were identified with disabilities. Their parents and local government officials and teachers in PAs received awareness raising training, and thematic trainings on caring and support for children affected by developmental delay and hearing impairment. Parent representatives also attended district workshops and events. At the end of this period, parents of CWD in these 2 communes started to have more positive views on the future of their children.

Achievements and Challenges

ITTP: HCIT trained 111 PWD students in its job-oriented long courses, more than doubling the 47 long course students it trained the previous year. VLU's achievement is no less impressive. In only its second year running ITTP, VLU trained 168 students in its long-courses, compared to 116 the previous year. The total number of PWD students trained in job-oriented long courses is 279.

These impressive achievements fell slightly short of the target of 300 PWD students trained at the two ITTPs. In hind sight the target set for this year was a little too ambitious, leading to challenges in recruiting enough qualified students. In the future, to ensure training quality, each ITTP school will only target training 100 PWD students per year.

PAs

Achievements

- All PAs can maintain their regular responsibilities and activities. PA members understand their roles and the benefits of self-help groups such as PAs. Parents are involved more in commune activities to support CWD.
- This project has successfully mobilized parents of CWD to send their children to regular schools. As children, both with and without disabilities, learn together, they learn to live together.
- PAs show more confidence in organizing events and implementing initiatives that bring the issue of inclusion of CWD into public discussion and provide opportunities for CWD to interact with their non-disabled peers.
- Most CWD participating in home-based support and peer groups continue to make positive progress. Progress made by children have inspired belief and confidence of parents in their children, therefore they are more committed to spend time supporting their children's progress.
- PAs started to expose their voices to disability community and started its linkage and connection with each other in commune level and with other cities such as Hanoi and Hoi An.

Challenges:

- Time for government staff who are involved in administration of this project is still limited as they have to fulfill both government responsibilities and project work. They are very enthusiastic but sometimes there are heavy workloads so project progress is behind schedule. Some vice heads of parent association representative board have been changed since they are too busy, causing disruptions in PA activities.
- Communication by emails between parents/villagers to staff at district level and CRS is limited due to limited IT skills and facilities. This caused difficulties and delays as sending hardcopies or asking other people for help can be a slow process.
- PAs are not very familiar with logistic and office work so the organization of activities, documentation and reporting have some limitation at grassroots level.
- PAs have no legal status, which limits their functioning.

Medium and long term impact

ITTP

ITTP is being implemented in higher education institutions, and this project exposed higher education institutions to recruiting, teaching, and supporting students with disabilities. These experiences have shattered the often-held belief among university managers and teachers that it is too difficult to accommodate students with disabilities in their schools. The project will continue to promote awareness raising and experience sharing on education of PWD in higher education levels. Through these efforts, more and more universities and colleges will open their doors to recruiting and training students with disabilities.

As more PWD find jobs in the IT sector, Vietnamese employers are beginning to recognize the benefits of hiring PWD employees. PWD employees are some of the most loyal and hardest working employees in a workplace. They often inspire their non-disabled peers to work harder

also. As these benefits become more widely recognized, more employers are expected to proactively hire PWD.

As more PWD find what many people in Vietnam believe to be prestigious jobs in the IT sector, this is expected to reduce the overall stigma toward PWD that they are only able to do manual labor such as massage and making tooth picks.

The government of Vietnam (GVN) has significantly improved the legal framework relating to disability issues in the past decade, and appears to be committed to supporting initiatives that promote social and educational inclusion of PWD. Numerous donor organizations, international organizations, and NGOs are working diligently to support GVN in its endeavors relating to disability issues. As Vietnam continues to modernize and integrate into the global economy, it will likely enjoy sustained economic growth for the foreseeable future. All of these factors working together will facilitate the achievement of the long term impacts of this project.

PAs

Parents' attitude and actions have great influence on CWD's quality of life and whether CWD go to school or not. PA members are best placed to motivate and support each other to promote inclusive education for their children. PAs can be an effective and sustainable model to address demand-side barriers for education for CWD. As shown in the evaluation last year, more than 75% of CWD in project area attend school. This rate is much higher than the national average of about 25%. If the PA model can be replicated widely throughout Vietnam, many more CWD would enjoy inclusive education.

Even as USAID discontinues its support for PAs, CRS will continue to mobilize resources from other sources to strengthen PAs and promote the replication of this model. As evidence of the effectiveness of PAs accumulates, and more organizations begin to recognize PAs' value, more resource will become available to promote the replication of PA model into other areas of Vietnam.

Gender

ITTP

In Vietnam, as in many other countries, men are more likely to study IT than women. In addition, students from provinces need to living in dormitory when in ITTP, and parents tend to be more reluctant to allow their daughters to live away from home. The project has placed special emphasis on ensuring privacy security and cleanliness of female students' living quarters. The project also made sure there are female teachers and school staff who will directly support female students in and out of classes. As more and more female students graduate from ITTP and find jobs, schools are able to use their stories as recruitment tools to convince potential female candidates and their parents that IT sector jobs are suitable for women and that the schools are committed to take care of their daughters.

PAs

For various reasons, some parents are reluctant to bring their CWD out of their homes. Others are fearful that their children with mild forms of disabilities (especially learning disabilities and intellectual delay) are identified as CWD. This is especially true for parents of girls with disabilities. Girls with disabilities are also disadvantaged because they are often seen as secondary to boys in the Vietnamese culture (as is the case in most Asian countries), poor families would prioritize resources for boys over girls, and non-disabled children over disabled children. So girls with disabilities are most likely to be kept at home and not sent to school. Since girls with disabilities are more likely to be hidden by their parents, their parents are less likely to voluntarily join PAs. With the right training, PA members are best placed to persuade reluctant parents to bring their daughters to school.

3. Lessons learnt

ITTP

- Training schools should carefully interview and screen each applicant to place candidates in suitable training courses based on their ability, their background education, their disability condition and their hobbies and interests.
- Student and their family should contribute some toward the costs of their training. This ensures ownership and responsibility of student in their study, and minimizes student drop out.
- Soft skill training program should be conducted by PWD trainer at start of training courses and reinforced throughout training courses. Students also need time and opportunities to practice their soft skills.
- In order to develop a sustainable ITTP program at school, it is very important to have good linkage between school and local businesses.
- ITTP alumni can provide support to current ITTP students in encourage learning and have positive attitude toward the future. Alumni can also help new ITTP graduates to find jobs and learn to be more independent.

PAs

- The more frequent parents participate in community events, more confident they become.
- When parents of CWD are placed in leadership roles of PAs, they are most active in initiating community-based activities.
- Parent associations should select core active, committed and responsible parents so they can contribute to the active involvement of parents associations in supporting CWD.
- When providing guidance to parents, verbal guidance should be accompanied by written guide that including sample documents or forms because parents sometimes forget all details when returning from training to replicate in their commune.
- Lists of CWD need to be regularly updated so that PAs can plan their support activities accordingly.
- Parents' expectations need to be managed as not all forms of disabilities are equally open to rehabilitation.
- Maintaining CWD's good health is very important to safeguard progress made through rehabilitation.

III. Participation of people with disabilities

PWD is one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Vietnam. As Vietnam develops and many more people are able to access education and benefit from the rapidly modernizing economy, PWD still face barriers in access to education and employment opportunities, and are at risk of being left farther behind. This project works with PWD to promote their rights in equal access to education and employment; through education and employment, PWD can have productive and fulfilling lives.

One of the aims of this project is to demonstrate that with moderate efforts, universities and colleges can accommodate PWD. This project have provided financial and technical support to help ITTP schools to improve the accessibility of their infrastructure; and through usage of sign language interpreters and assistive technologies, ITTP is accessible to students with hearing impairments and visual impairments.

ITTP schools worked with local DPOs for recruitment, soft skill training and job placement for graduates. IDEA in Hanoi and DRD in Ho Chi Minh City are two of the most active DPOs in providing soft skill, job preparation training and job placement for PWD. Staff of IDEA and DRD who are PWD directly provide training and support to ITTP students, and this has shown to be effective in building confidence of ITTP students. Vietnam Blind Association, Hanoi Deaf Association and HCMC Deaf Association also assign their staff who are to work with ITTP schools in recruiting and training students. Mr. Tran Ba Thien and Mr. Hoang Moc Kien are two blind teachers of the TOT training program for people with visual impairments.

Under this project, PAs established linkage with local disabled persons' organizations (DPOs) for consultation and cooperation. At training events in both Quang Nam and Ninh Binh provinces, representatives from the local DPO or experienced PWD were invited to facilitate different training sessions. In Quang Nam, Mr. Trinh Xuan Vinh, a person with physical disabilities and a parent of a child with multiple disabilities (cerebral palsy and intellectual disability) were invited to be trainer at awareness raising training on disability and inclusive education for all parents of CWD of Que Son district and Thang Binh district. DPOs and representatives invited to different training workshops contributed toward changing parents' and local authorities' views toward people and children with disabilities.

IV. Evaluation

ITTP

During the development of ITTP model manual, Ms. Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy, CRS's consultant evaluated ITTP implementation at HCIT and VLU. Below is a list of key findings that will help the project to continue to improve ITTP in the coming years:

- Students have diverse background and IT knowledge. Teachers should adopt flexible instructional methods. ITTP schools should continue to use study groups from the start of each course to allow students with more IT knowledge to help students with less IT knowledge.

- Relying on classroom instruction only is not enough; teachers should provide additional materials/guidance to promote self-learning outside of classes, and additional time for practice.
- Further integrate soft skill training into curriculum, with focus on communication skills, interview skills.
- ITTP students often have little vision of what they want to do in the future, therefore ITTP students should be linked to vocational orientation and counseling services.
- Participation of businesses in all process of the training program is important to ensure high employment rates of graduates.
- Participation of PWD (such as DPO staff and ITTP alumni) in all process of the training program can help connect the program with PWD, motivate students to follow good examples, and link students with labor market.

PAs

A quick internal and participatory evaluation was made during final workshops with PAs in both Ninh Binh and Quang Nam province. All parents, CWD, government staff and community members highly appreciated the project achievements and the support from USAID and CRS. Most of members of PA representative board evaluated the increasingly positive attitude change among CWD parents toward disability issues, rights of CWD, especially among ethnic minority parents in Phuoc Gia and Phuoc Tra communes. The pro-activeness of core parents in proposing and implementing community-based activities for PA members and CWD are remarked by local government officers.

Some findings for improvement in the future included the importance of cooperation between PAs and local authorities and among PAs themselves, which leads to many successful in the holistic supports for CWD. Frequent and enthusiastic participation of parents is also the key element for the success of the project. In the coming time, PAs suggest to organize more training courses for capacity building, provide more supports for children with severe disabilities and continue currents PA activities so PAs can be enhanced to gradually become independent.

V. Success Stories

Case studies of project beneficiaries are attached as separate documents.

VI. Indicator Results and Targets

Standard Indicator		2011 Result	2012 Target	2013 Target	2014 Target
1. Number of people benefiting from USG-supported social services		1573	500	200	200
Deviation Type:	Slightly below target	Date of last DQA		11/2010	

	(MM/YYYY)
Explanation 279 youth with disabilities completed job-oriented ITTP training in Hanoi and HCMC. (target: 300) 9 visually impaired students completed basic IT training in HCMC. 3 youth with disabilities enrolled in inclusive classes that received scholarships from the project. (target: 20) 1282 CWD benefited from community-based services. (target: 1300) ITTP schools had challenges in recruiting enough qualified students to join IT training. In the next three years, no ITTP school will target to train more than 100 PWD students per year. CRS was able to confirm 1282 CWD through medical screening by trained doctors and special education teachers. Some children suspected of having disabilities did not come to the screening because of conflicting schedule or some parents were reluctant to have their children identified as having disabilities. It is likely that the project has benefited more than the targeted 1300 CWD, but without being examined by trained practitioners, we do not know how many other CWD have benefited by this project.	

Standard Indicator		2011 Result	2012 Target	2013 Target	2014 Target
2. Number of service providers trained who serve vulnerable persons		2991	95	50	75
Deviation Type:	Exceeds target		Date of last DQA (MM/YYYY)	11/2010	
Explanation 1222 PA members trained in disability issues, project management, and community-based rehabilitation techniques. 1769 additional parents and caretakers participated in PA activities such as PA meetings, awareness raising events, small grant projects, home-based counseling, etc. The overall achievement surpassed the target of 2600 service providers trained who serve vulnerable persons.					

Standard Indicator	2011 Result	2012 Target	2013 Target	2014 Target
3. Number of USG-assisted organizations and service delivery systems strengthened who serve vulnerable populations	36	10	10	10
Deviation Type:	Met target	Date of last DQA (MM/YYYY)	11/2010	

Explanation
26 new parent associations formed.
10 new businesses involved in job placement of ITTP graduates in Hanoi and HCMC.

VII. Expenditures

SF 425 for the last quarter of the fiscal year is submitted in a separate email.

VIII. Work-plan for the following fiscal year

CRS's IVWD FY 2012 work plan and budget spread is attached as a separate Excel document.